

Message Text

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ACTION EA-14

INFO OCT-01 NEA-14 ISO-00 AEC-11 ACDA-19 CIAE-00 INR-10

IO-14 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-07 RSC-01 SCI-06 FEA-02 PM-07

SP-03 SS-20 H-03 DODE-00 PA-04 USIA-15 PRS-01 DRC-01

/156 W

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R 281121Z MAY 74

FM AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3645

INFO AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE BANGKOK 8619

E.O. 11652: NA

TAGS: PARM, IN, TH

SUBJ: THAI REACTION TO INDIAN EXPLOSION

1. THE THAI, IN THE MIDST OF AN INTERNAL POLITICAL CRISIS, HAVE PAID SCANT ATTENTION TO THE INDIAN NUCLEAR BLAST. EMBASSY OFFICERS, IN CONVERSATIONS WITH MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS OFFICIALS, HAVE RAISED THE SUBJECT BUT HAVE ELICITED NO GLIMMERING OF THE OFFICIAL THAI POSITION ON THE BLAST, IF INDEED THERE IS ONE.

2. THE "BANGKOK POST" ON MAY 19 REPORTED THAT FOREIGN MINISTER CHARUNPHAN ITSARANGKUN NA AYUTTHAYA SAID THAT INDIA WAS NOT CHALLENGING OTHER COUNTRIES BUT HAD MERELY PERFORMED THE TEST AS A SECURITY MEASURE. SUCH A RESPONSE IS IN KEEPING WITH CHARUNPHAN'S POLICY OF NOT RUFFLING FEATHERS. THE "POST" STORY ALSO REPORTED THAT DR. SAWAT SISUK, DIRECTOR OF THE ATOMIC ENERGY FOR PEACE AUTHORITY, WAS NOT SURPRISED, QUOTING HIM SOMEWHAT PETULANTLY AS SAYING THAT OTHER "ASIAN COUNTRIES COULD ALSO BE SUCCESSFUL IN THIS FIELD IF THEY HAD THE SUPPORT OF THEIR GOVERNMENTS."

3. MOST OTHER NEWSPAPERS WERE CONTENT TO COVER THE EVENT WITH LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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WIRE SERVICE STORIES. TWO CHINESE NEWSPAPERS COMMENTED ON THE

EVENT'S NOTEWORTHINESS, BUT DID NOT ELABORATE ON THE CONSEQUENCES. ONE INDICATION THE PRESS MAY BE COMING MORE AWARE OF THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STORY WAS THE "BANGKOK WORLD'S" EDITORIAL ON THE BLAST MAY 23. THE "WORLD" CONDEMNED THE INDIAN ACTION AS AN ATTEMPT TO "RALLY POLITICAL SUPPORT FOR AN AILING GOVERNMENT AND TO DIVERT ATTENTION FROM THE PROBLEMS THAT IT HAS FAILED TO SOLVE." IT SAID THAT INDIA WAS TRYING TO GAIN INFLUENCE AT A TIME WHEN IT NEEDED FOOD.

4. AT A THAI-USIS SPONSORED ENERGY CONFERENCE MAY 24, LEADING THAI SCIENTISTS AND EDUCATORS DISCUSSED THE ETHICAL AND POLITICAL IMPLICATIONS OF THE ENERGY SHORTAGE WITHOUT ONCE ALLUDING THE THE INDIAN NUCLEAR BLAST.

5. COMMENT: THE NEWS OF THE INDIAN ATOMIC DETONATION ARRIVED AT A TIME WHEN THE THAI WERE PREOCCUPIED WITH THEIR OWN INTERNAL PROBLEMS. THE SIGNIFICANCE HAS YET TO SINK IN, BUT THE ONLY INDIANS THE THAI TAKE SERIOUSLY ARE THE LOCAL CLOTH MERCHANTS. MASTERS

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Message Attributes

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